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NOV. 3 1992

EDITORIALS

The term-limit referendum

On paper, America does not have a national referendum process, but amid the flood of election returns tonight, about one-third of the nation's voters will be rendering a judgment on the crucial question of term limits for Congress.

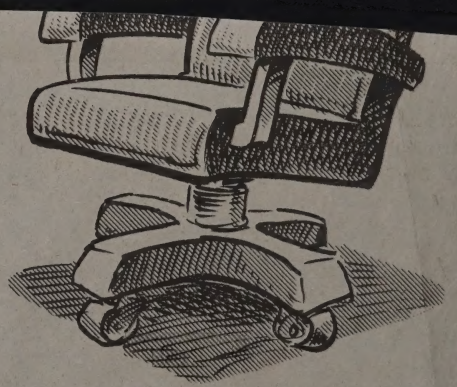
In 14 states, including some of the most populous in the nation, voters today will decide whether to limit the terms of the senators and congressmen they send to Washington. Heavyweight states making that decision include California, Ohio, Florida and Michigan. Others with term limits on the ballot are Arizona, Arkansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakaota, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington and Wyoming. Polls show the initiatives leading in every state, in several by wide margins.

It's been the sleeper story of the 1992 campaign, but this is as close as we have ever come to a national referendum through a popular vote. Never before has the same basic issue been on so many ballots in one election. Nationwide, more

ning ads that say backers of term limits "want oil drilling off our shores and supertankers in Puget Sound." The fact that there is no connection between term limits and the oil industry makes no difference.

In Michigan, 30-second ads against term limits claim "out-of-state interests" supporting the initiative want to abolish the Environmental Protection Agency and divert water from the Great Lakes. Again, there's no connection between these horror stories and the real issue of term limits, which is to limit the power of incumbent politicians.

This will not be the first time term limits will have been tested at the polls. Two years ago, Colorado voters ignited the term-limit movement by becoming the first state in the nation to limit the terms of its congressional delegation, as well as all elected officials in state government. Voters in California and Oklahoma have also passed term limits on state officeholders, and a number of cit-



GUEST COMMENTARY

States are seek

By **Edwin Feulner**

Thomas Jefferson, who did more

Fra
time